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# THE HEBREW STUDENT.

A Monthly Journal in the Interests of Old Testament Literature and Interpretation.

W. R. HARPER, Ph. D.,

Editor.

כִּי־שִׁפְתֵי כֹהֵן יִשְׁמְרוּ־דַעַת

וְתוֹרָה יִבְקְשׁוּ מִפִּיהוּ

כִּי מִלֶּאֱן יְהוֹדֵעַבְאוֹת הוּא: (Mal., II, 7.)

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## A GENERAL STATEMENT.

It is desirable that the position and claims of THE HEBREW STUDENT be rightly understood and appreciated. It has been instituted for a certain purpose, and in view of this purpose it has certain claims. It is true that the object sought to be accomplished may not be realized, that the claims presented may be regarded as pretentious; nevertheless, for the sake of those who are interested in the periodical, it is well to state these in a manner which cannot be misunderstood.

THE HEBREW STUDENT does not aspire, in any sense, to the dignity of a "Review." It is not intended solely for the discussion of critical questions in the line of study to which it is devoted. Critical questions will be discussed in it, and, indeed, such discussion will constitute the important feature of the periodical; but there is a broader, it may be called a *lower*, field of activity, in which if it is permitted, it will move. It is established, *primarily and chiefly*, to furnish to pastors and students, that stimulus and aid in Old Testament study, of which so many, confessedly, stand in need. Now it is clear that, with this aim in view, the simple publication of critical articles will not suffice. Clergymen desire, of course, a certain amount of critical matter; but there is a great abundance of material, in no proper sense termed critical, which they need, and which they should have. This periodical, it is to be understood, is intended for pastors and students, not solely for

specialists. It is intended to encourage and stimulate study, not merely to instruct.

Established for such a purpose, it may, if satisfactorily conducted, fairly be said to deserve

(1) the kind consideration and friendly attitude of all whom it may reach;

(2) the patronage and encouragement of all who are in any way interested in Old Testament study; and

(3) assistance in the way of contributions, from all Old Testament students and scholars.

In support of this statement, it may be proper to urge the following considerations:—

(1) It is the only Old Testament periodical published in America, the only monthly of the kind in the world. Prof. Franz Delitzsch has urged that it be made a quarterly; he maintains that "a monthly cannot be supported, that sufficient material cannot be furnished." But a quarterly would not answer the purpose we have in mind. If the Journal cannot succeed as a monthly, it could not as a quarterly. These questions and this study must be urged upon pastors more frequently than it can be done through quarterlies. If the truth were known, it is probable that even the majority of the very limited number who read "Reviews" pass over "lightly" this class of articles. To be effective, the subject must be presented lively, emphatically, frequently.

(2) It is published at a lower rate of subscription than any periodical of a similar character in the United States. If the same amount of matter were printed in quarterly form, it would make in the course of a year 550 pages of the Presbyterian Review, 700 of the Methodist Review, and 850 of the Baptist Review. The subscription price, *One Dollar*, is so low, indeed, as to render it possible for every one, who desires, to have it.

(3) The popular character of the periodical, as referred to above, is a third consideration to be urged in its behalf. Adapted to the wants of all classes of Old Testament students, it will cover a much broader field than if it were intended solely for specialists. "It is just what I wanted," "It is exactly what I have been looking for," "I wonder that something like it was not started long ago,"—these are samples of a multitude of opinions which have been expressed after the perusal of the first number.

(4) The scholarly character of the Journal will be as marked as its popular character, for it is confidently believed that a publication may be scholarly, although at the same time popular. To ascertain the facts in the case, it is only necessary to read the partial list of contributors; or to examine the pages of this and the preceding number. Such an examination, we think, will be a sufficient guarantee in reference to this point.

(5) The conservative attitude of the paper towards all "theories," will still further commend it to ministers and students of whatever denomination. All questions which come up will be dealt with fairly, and within reasonable limits freedom of utterance will be allowed, yet in all discussions "the general principle of conservatism shall rule."

(6) One can scarcely over-estimate the value of such a Journal, as an incentive to a kind of work which is too often distasteful, and generally neglected. The pastor is the most heavily burdened of all men; and amidst the cares

and anxiety which press upon him, he not seldom forgets a duty which he owes to himself and to the cause which he represents, viz., *the close and critical study* of the Word which he preaches. If reminded of the fact, he at once recognizes it, but the difficulties in the way are so great, the interruptions so many, that some outside influence must be brought to bear, if a change is to be effected. Such an outside influence THE HEBREW STUDENT is intended to furnish, and short as has been its history, the good already wrought in this direction is by no means inconsiderable.

(7) It is unnecessary here to refer to the importance, at the present time, of Old Testament study. Old Testament questions are the "burning questions" of the day. And it would seem a wise policy on the part of *thinking* ministers and laymen, to follow the discussions on these questions as they appear from time to time.

This purpose, these claims, and the considerations supporting these claims, we lay before the *five thousand* pastors and students, who receive this number, and we ask in all earnestness, is this not an undertaking which every Christian can well afford to encourage and assist?

## EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE fourth edition of Delitzsch's Hebrew New Testament, just published, will be welcomed by all lovers of the Hebrew. Such a version will prove of valuable service. In missionary work among the Jews, it will, of course, be indispensable. A translation was issued some years since by the London Society, but it is far from being first-rate. Aside from this however, as is suggested by Caspar René Gregor (THE INDEPENDENT, April 13th), it will offer to ministers "a more intimate acquaintance with the New Testament, by giving to the Gospels the coloring of the speech in which the characters depicted spoke." This is a suggestion of no mean importance. It is now generally agreed that Christ spoke for the most part in Aramaic, and it has been said that nearly all recent progress in New Testament learning has come from a deeper delving through the treasures of Aramaic and Neo-Hebrew. Such being the case, the value of a translation into Hebrew, through the study of which one must pass to that of Aramaic, cannot easily be over-estimated.

It has been but a few years since the departments of Old and New Testament exegesis were assigned to a single professor, who was expected to perform the duties of both. They were, in fact, regarded as a single department, and *together* received only as much time as was given to each of the other departments. This arrangement, it is true, still exists in a few seminaries; but in the great majority of theological schools, the fact is recognized that these are distinct departments, each entitled to the entire service of an instructor. Nor is this all; in some of the largest and best equipped seminaries, an assistant professor is employed in the department of the Old Testament. Is this not significant? That which in time past has been neglected, is now to receive its due share of attention. No one, it is believed, can object to this.

"We are busy also in trying to increase the number of those who can read God's word in the original." So writes a distinguished professor and scholar in one of our largest seminaries. The course of study is essentially the same in all theological schools, and it is *supposed* to be the best that can be pursued by those who are preparing for the ministry. It is the course of study which has been mapped out by the united wisdom of the leaders of all denominations. But is it the best? Can it not be improved? Would it not be better, the voice of church-leaders to the contrary, e.g., to omit that distasteful, distressing, disturbing study, that theological bug-bear, *Hebrew*? It is probable that if allowed to reconstruct the course, nine-tenths of the students who enter the theological seminary would strike Hebrew out of the curriculum. And why? For the same reason that children, if it were left to their pleasure, would do away with schools. Such students, and there are too many such, not only betray their ignorance of that which is best for them, but exhibit an unjustifiable and unpardonable spirit in presuming to dictate concerning a matter in reference to which there is, so generally, a united opinion.

THE controversy concerning the Pentateuch, which was kindled in Germany by Wellhausen's "History of Israel," and in Great Britain and the United States through Robertson Smith's "Lectures on the Old Testament in the Jewish Church," is still increasing. That which has occasioned so great anxiety to many, is not so much the results of Wellhausen's investigations as the irreverent and even frivolous manner, in which he has declared almost the whole Mosaic law a product of the exilic and post-exilic age, pronouncing the history of the Exodus and of the legislation legendary or merely fictitious. Professor Delitzsch, who has always recognized the well-founded right of Pentateuchal analysis, has published twelve Essays, entitled "Critical Studies on the Pentateuch," in Luthardt's "*Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft und kirchliches Leben*" for the year 1880, in which he undertakes to show that it is possible to maintain the union of different records and codifications in the Pentateuch without denying the essential truth of the history, and without surrendering the reverence which we owe to the Holy Scriptures. As these twelve Essays are not accessible to most American readers, a compendious statement of Professor Delitzsch's views, which he has given in the form of theses to his English Exegetical Society, cannot but be welcomed by the public as well as by the more critical students. These theses are in this number printed together, *for the first time*, and being, it is believed, free from inaccuracies, may be regarded as the latest expression of the views, held by the renowned Professor upon this important topic, *The New Criticism*.

THE notices, given "THE HEBREW STUDENT" by the religious press of different denominations, have been very kind and encouraging. From all sides there have been received words of commendation and wishes for success. It is certainly a source of great satisfaction to have this to say. We do not enter upon the editorial work without many misgivings. There are some points which make the